

# "MADAME" PRESIDENT FOR THE UNITED STATES VISION OF 87-YEAR-OLD WOMAN SENATOR

*Mrs. Rebecca Felton, Georgia, First to Join August Body of Lawmakers, Sees but One More Glory to Be Attained by Her Sex in Governmental Affairs*

*Ballot, in Hands of Mothers and Girls of Today, She Believes, Assures Safety of the Country*

WHO will be the first woman President of the United States? Which party will nominate her, what city in the country, what home holds this historic person?

Eighty years ago these questions would have seemed preposterous. Today they are being asked by the first woman Senator of the United States.

And if that fact isn't significant enough; if the present position and sex of the questioner doesn't give unusual weight to her question, then the world is all wrong and nobody ought to "jine the army."

When Mrs. Rebecca Felton, of Cartersville, Ga., widow of Dr. William H. Felton, was a little child, Andrew Jackson was President of the United States.

Little did she suspect, in that day and generation, and he had his finger on the pulse of the Nation, that, within the life of a child living then, the minds of thinking people would be directed toward the possibility of a woman gracing his presidential chair; neither did she suspect that a woman would actually be appointed to the United States Senate.

But the world is noted for a number of things, among them the shattering of accepted notions, and today Mrs. Felton is a member of the National Congress, and today she comments on her appointment in this wise:

"Now it remains only for a woman to be elected President of these United States. Every office has been filled, with one or two exceptions."

"What State shall be the first to place one of its daughters in that exalted chair in the White House?"

And it isn't that she is unfamiliar with political and social tendencies in this country. Since 1853 she has been investigator of and publicist for national events. Politics has entered her life intimately; her husband was a member of Congress; it was she who wrote his fiery speeches and stumped for him. She certainly ought to know what she is talking about.

Eighty-seven years old last June, possessed of every faculty, including a marked sense of humor, Mrs. Felton is believed to be the best informed on national and international problems of any women in the South.

On her little vine-covered porch, overlooking her 500-acre cotton plantation—which, by the way, she actively manages—once her day's work is ended, she willingly and amiably receives her many visitors.

She is a small woman, with snow-white hair, and the years have touched her cheeks tragically enough. Her eyes, brilliantly dark, are softened by a ready twinkle.

"Child," she will say to you, if you ask, "what you can't help but behind you. Needless worry is the bane of American life today—and when you come right down to it, most all worry is the needless kind."

She will look at you gravely for a moment and then smile—and her smile is as rich as her snow-white hair.

## Flapper Is All Right, Says 87-Year-Old Woman

For all her years, Mrs. Felton is most progressive. She votes for the best man, regardless of parties. She likes the so-called flapper, and she has pronounced and individualistic views on almost every matter under the sun.

She was born June 10, 1835, on a plantation seventeen miles from Atlanta, Ga. When she was nine her family moved to Decatur, a suburb of Atlanta. She went to elementary school in Atlanta and in Oxford, Ga., and then matriculated at the Madison Female College, Madison, Ga.

"I was graduated from there when I was seventeen and married when I was eighteen. My husband delivered the graduation address. That's how I met him."

Dr. Felton died in 1909. At the outbreak of the war between the States Dr. Felton was a secessionist, Mrs. Felton an ardent anti-secessionist, although she remained loyal to the South during the war.

She has had five children, only one of whom is still alive, and with this son, Dr. Howard F. Felton, she lives in a six-room plantation cottage two miles from Cartersville.

Politics, modern girls, social ills are "easy meat" for this "Grand Old Woman of Georgia," as she is called. And she was somehow incongruous sitting there on the porch the other day, looking so much like the quiet old brocade-and-lace lady whom fictionists like to dwell upon, and yet discussing current events with the vigor and knowledge of a dyed-in-the-wool cigar-chewing statesman.

"I would have worked for a bonus for our brave boys who went across the ocean to fight," she said, "but Uncle Joe Cannon, I would have

made with labor ten to twenty times as cheap as we are able to get it, and undersell us."

"Our manufacturing in the South is in its infancy. We need to stand by and help. And, unless we can sell our goods cheaper than a man from China, Japan, Germany or France, we cannot hope to see our industries grow."

"Of course, it may hurt agriculture some. Peanuts, I understand, have dropped \$20 a ton since it became effective."

"But wherever there is a greater good to be done, the smaller hurt should not be noticed. Worry not about those things that you cannot help—think more of the greater good for the greatest number."

"There's our cotton. We are just



With fingers still on the pulse of the world, Mrs. Felton keeps up with the events of the day

only right, and if I get to sit in the Senate, I'm going to make myself heard on this point."

Mrs. Felton said she had analyzed the recent measure which President Harding vetoed, and while she did not say in so many words that she approved of the presidential action, she intimated she thought he had taken the right course. She pointed out that the bill was too vague, and that it did not differentiate enough between the soldiers who went across the seas and the ones who stayed at home.

"But at that," Mrs. Felton exclaimed, "had I been in the Senate when the Selective Service Act was introduced I would have fought it tooth and nail—I would not only have fought to keep from conscripting our boys, but would have given my reasons for sending them to foreign shores to fight an enemy. Conscription is all wrong. It costs too much of the country's money."

"But think of it, yesterday—those brave lads went, they went cheerfully, and fought and died. They suffered untold hardships, were treated like so many cattle, and it is only right that we who stayed at home, ought to be in the front of our great country, should do something to aid them, how they are laid."

"What if we were to do a little more? What if we have to do without something? How could we ever hope to pay these soldiers for what they did for us? It means so much to so many thousands of them who are walking the streets of our own South today, and so little to the great mass of people who would have to pay it. A right kind of bonus measure should not be fought. It should be passed by a unanimous vote by both branches of our Congress, and our President should speedily approve it. I hope I get a chance to vote on one."

## Southern, Yet Approves Protective Tariff

Turning from the bonus, Mrs. Felton said she heartily approved of the protective tariff recently passed.

"We of the South should have a protective tariff as a real blessing. We cannot expect our industries to thrive if we allow foreign manufacturers to come into our country with their goods,

beginning to see how much more valuable it is going to be to us when we get our own mills to spinning, so that we won't have to ship it way up to New England, and then buy it back at twenty times the price we were paid for it."

"What if Japan with her labor cost, practically nothing could send her manufactured cotton goods into our country and sell on an equal footing with our own mills—how long would our plants survive?"

"I'd vote every time for a tariff that protects."

Mrs. Felton's views on prohibition are straightforward. In a single syllable she quickly answered a question put to her regarding the agitation for a moderation of the Volstead act.

"No," she answered quickly. "Young man," Mrs. Felton shook a gentle finger in the air. "I'd a million times rather cut off my good right arm than see whiskey brought back into our country. Oh, for that matter, we don't spend prohibition not needed in any degree at all."

"If you could have lived when I was a young woman and could have seen the wretchedness it brought on many homes right here in my own country, you couldn't ask me if I would like to see it even modified."

"Prohibition? And bless the glorious Congress that made it a law to keep and to prevent the use of intoxicants in any way whatsoever."

## Congress Too Talkative and Short on Action

Mrs. Felton scored the Congress just adjourned for its slowness. She said that the only worth-while act passed was the tariff measure, and that required entirely too much time and delay. Congress needs speeding up, in the opinion of this venerable woman.

"Delates on every big bill have got so they are all out of proportion, and something should be done to stop them," she declared.

There is every likelihood of Mrs. Felton taking her seat in the Senate, even though it does not meet until its regular time in December.

She will not run in the special primary that has been called for October 17, but will back Governor Hardwick, who served in the Senate with Hoke Smith during President Wilson's Administration. Hardwick was defeated, when seeking re-election, by the Wilson candidate; but two years later, running on the same platform, he swept the State for Governor.

Recently, however, again asking the



Senator Rebecca Felton



The old square piano in the Felton home is not merely a decorative piece of furniture. Mrs. Felton still plays

Strumming quietly and contentedly, Mrs. Felton still loves the old-time songs. It's probably "Old Black Joe" or "Swanee River" she's singing

nomination for Governor, he lost, and Charles W. Walker, running with the backing of Watson, won.

Now, however, with Mrs. Felton behind him, and with seven supposedly Watson men opposing him, Governor Hardwick is destined to be elected to the four years of the late Senator Watson's unexpired term.

If he is elected, he is understood that he will remain away from the Senate long enough to allow Mrs. Felton to be present before the bar and take her seat as a regular member.

Mrs. Felton is, in reality, a Senator now. Despite special dispatches from Washington stating that she cannot become a member until she is presented at the bar of the Senate, Governor Hardwick has declared that she can take the oath of office in Atlanta, and that as soon as she does this, she will become a full-fledged member of the

Mrs. Felton enjoys more than one distinction. She reads the Congressional Directory and admits it

country's highest branch of law-making. Mrs. Felton wields a trenchant pen.

In addition to her numerous activities in State-wide issues, she has found time to write two books, "Country Life

in Georgia," and "My Memoirs of Georgia Politics." Both have been widely read throughout the South, and are frequently quoted. She also has contributed regularly to numerous magazines, and for the last forty years regularly has conducted a department in the tri-weekly edition of the Atlanta Journal.

Half a century before women were supposed to know there was such a thing as politics, Mrs. Felton waded into the limelight by advocating woman suffrage, and she has stayed there ever since. She occupies a unique place in politics. Even President Harding recognized this, and during the spring preceding his inauguration, he invited her to spend several days with him in Bellaire, Florida, where they discussed national topics.

## Invited by President for Important Conference

Mrs. Felton's bright brown eyes twinkled as she recalled this interview.

"President Harding told me that so far as it lay in his power he was going to see that the South had a fair deal from his Administration. He seemed to me to be a mighty fine man, and his Administration has been one that I would have predicted for him," she said.

"I'm not going to say what I think of what he has accomplished or hasn't accomplished so far. He's only been in a little over a year, and it wouldn't be fair to judge him yet."

"I think, though, we in the South have been very fairly treated, don't you?"

Mrs. Felton first became interested in politics through her husband, Dr. William H. Felton, for many years State Representative from the Seventh District and later in the lower branch of Congress.

It has been said that she wrote all of Dr. Felton's speeches, for which he

when I think they are on the right side. There's no sense in voting for something you think wrong just because your particular party doesn't happen to be championing it."

## Rally Call to Mothers to Make Use of Ballot

Mrs. Felton has great faith in the mothers of this country. She dwells upon the great good that mothers can do in politics.

"A woman will do anything for her child," she said, "and when women realize what they can accomplish with their ballots and influence in making this a better world for their own and other mothers' children, they'll rally to the cause of suffrage without delay."

"I'm not much concerned about the modern girl—flappers—let's just what you young men call them?"

"They'll come out all right, for I've great faith in motherhood. That's the greatest thing on this earth, something every woman holds dear and sweet, and it is the whole world's salvation."

"Don't you worry about our girls. We all pass through a sort of giddy age. The girls nowadays aren't much different from what they were when I was young. Times, environment and standards change, and we shouldn't judge present-day people by ante-bellum patterns."

Asked what she thought the country needed most today, Mrs. Felton responded vigorously:

"More of the teachings and inspirations gained at the knees of our mothers, at the little old school houses and the Sunday schools. No law ever enacted can improve the earnest admonition of Scripture to 'Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy strength and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself.'"

"Good law and lawmakers we have

already. What is needed is enforcement and observance of the laws on the statute books. There must be more encouragement for educators and improvement of our living standards."

With all her many duties, Mrs. Felton is in close touch with the Congressional Record. On her table in her living room she has a bound file of the daily proceedings of the national body, and says she tries faithfully to read it every day.

"People who want to keep up with what our country is doing, and especially the men we have sent to Congress to make our laws for us, should equally read the Congressional Record. I can't remember a day when I haven't read a portion of it as I get it. I don't skip through it, but I read it closely so that I may keep myself informed as to the trend of events in Washington, as well as how every member of that body comport himself."

"I think everybody should read it. Then we would have more intelligent voting in election day."

Mrs. Felton likes to accommodate everybody, and is the delight of the photographer. During the interview, several camera men came to see her and ask her to allow them to "shoot" her in various poses around her home. To each she graciously consented, and took the various positions with an enthusiasm that infected the blasé picture-makers themselves.

Characteristic of her attitude of always thinking of the other man are the words with which she thanked Governor Hardwick for his appointment to the Senate.

"It is not of the personal glories that I think, but of the great rejoicing that must come to the millions of women throughout the United States, when the news is flashed to them that a woman has been named to the greatest body of law-makers in the known world."

"What a forward step it is to women in politics. A number of other women are on equal footing with men in the United States Senate."

"How happy I am and how proud I am of Governor Hardwick for his courage in naming a woman to the post. And, it is even more gratifying to me to realize that it remained for my own native State to honor women in this manner."

"Now it only remains for a woman to be elected President of these United States. Every office has been filled, with only one or two exceptions."

"What State shall be the first to place one of its daughters in that exalted chair in the White House?"

And so this "Grand Old Woman," already seventeen years beyond that milestone of three score and ten, looks forward to the day when she shall enter the portals and take her place before the bar of the Senate, looks forward to it with eyes aglow and heart full, but with the steadfast belief that it is women's right and place to sit in counsel with their men, and help shape the destiny of our nation.

And she looks far beyond that seat in the Senate—not for herself, but for Woman.



Mrs. Felton enjoys more than one distinction. She reads the Congressional Directory and admits it

country's highest branch of law-making. Mrs. Felton wields a trenchant pen.

In addition to her numerous activities in State-wide issues, she has found time to write two books, "Country Life

I'll vote with the Democrats when I think they are right, but I'll quickly turn and vote with the Republicans